

# Supporting Information

## Facile Synthesis of 9H-Pyrrolo[1,2- $\alpha$ ]indoles Via Brønsted Acid Catalyzed Cascade Reaction

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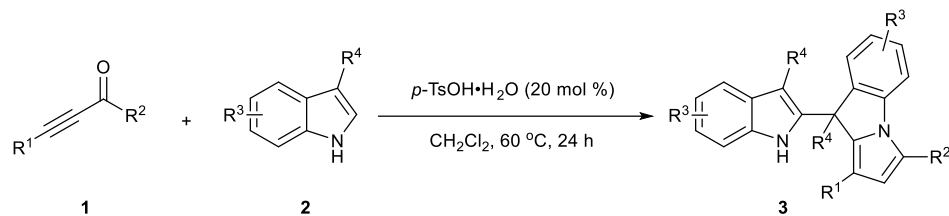
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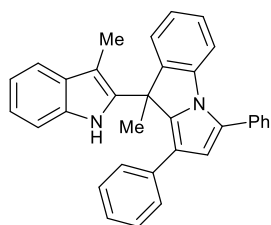
## 1. General information

Catalytic reactions were carried out in sealed tubes under an air atmosphere with dry dichloromethane. All the ynones **1** and indoles **2** have been synthesized following procedures reported in the literature.<sup>1,2</sup> Other chemicals were obtained from commercial sources and were used without further purification. The  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectra were recorded on JEOL at 400 MHz for  $^1\text{H}$  or at 100 MHz for  $^{13}\text{C}$ , respectively. The chemical shifts ( $\delta$ ) for  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  are given in ppm relative to residual signals of the solvents ( $\text{CHCl}_3$  7.26 ppm  $^1\text{H}$  NMR, 77.16 ppm  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR). Mass spectra and high-resolution mass spectra were measured on a Thermo-DFS mass spectrometer. Analysis of crude reaction mixture was done on an Agilent 7890 GC System with an Agilent 5975 Mass Selective Detector. For thin layer chromatography (TLC) analysis throughout this work, Merck precoated TLC plates (silica gel 60 GF<sub>254</sub>, 0.25 mm) were used, Silica gel 60H (200-300 mesh) manufactured by Qingdao Haiyang Chemical Group Co. (China) were used for general chromatography, using UV light as the visualizing agent and an acidic mixture of ceric ammonium molybdate or basic aqueous potassium permanganate ( $\text{KMnO}_4$ ), and heat as developing agents. Organic solutions were concentrated under reduced pressure on a Büchi rotary evaporator.

## 2. General procedure for the synthesis of 9H-pyrrolo[1,2-*a*]indoles



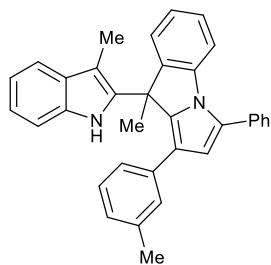
A solution of *p*-TsOH H<sub>2</sub>O (7.6 mg, 0.04 mmol, 20 mol%), ynone **1** (0.2 mmol) and 3-substituted indole **2** (0.8 mmol) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.4 mL) was stirred at 60 °C for 24 h. After cooling to ambient temperature, the mixture was purified by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether /EtOAc) to afford the desired product **3**.



### 9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-*a*]indole (**3aa**)

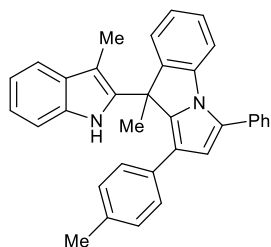
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3aa** (66 mg, 74%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.09 (s, 1H), 7.70 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.55 – 7.51 (m, 3H), 7.46 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 7.34 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.23 – 7.10 (m, 10H), 7.01 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.62 (s, 1H), 2.08 (s, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 144.3, 139.7, 138.9, 135.3, 135.2, 134.7, 132.7, 130.5, 129.3, 129.0, 128.64, 128.61, 127.9, 127.7, 127.0, 125.8, 124.4, 124.2, 121.7, 119.9, 119.3, 118.5, 114.1, 112.0, 110.7, 108.2, 45.6, 22.9, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>33</sub>H<sub>26</sub>N<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 451.21742, found: 451.21625.

**1 mmol scale reaction:** A solution of *p*-TsOH H<sub>2</sub>O (38 mg, 0.2 mmol, 20 mol %), ynone **1a** (1 mmol, 206 mg) and indole **2a** (4 mmol, 524 mg) in CHCl<sub>2</sub> (2 mL) was stirred at 60 °C for 24 h. After cooling to ambient temperature, the mixture was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) to afford the desired product **3aa** (314 mg, 70%).



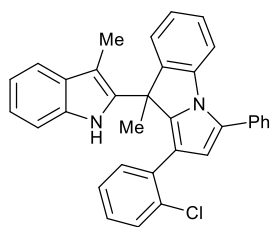
**9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-3-phenyl-1-(m-tolyl)-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ab)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1b** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3ab** (64 mg, 68%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.10 (s, 1H), 7.71 – 7.69 (m, 2H), 7.55 – 7.54 (m, 1H), 7.53 – 7.51 (m, 2H), 7.48 – 7.43 (m, 1H), 7.34 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.20 – 7.16 (m, 2H), 7.14 – 7.09 (m, 3H), 7.06 – 7.00 (m, 3H), 6.91 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.81 (s, 1H), 6.59 (s, 1H), 2.05 (s, 6H), 2.04 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 144.3, 139.8, 139.1, 138.0, 135.4, 135.1, 134.7, 132.8, 130.4, 129.3, 128.8, 128.6, 128.5, 128.0, 127.9, 127.7, 126.5, 124.5, 124.2, 124.0, 121.7, 119.9, 119.4, 118.5, 114.2, 112.0, 110.7, 108.3, 45.5, 23.2, 21.4, 8.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>34</sub>H<sub>26</sub>N<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 465.23307, found: 465.23313.



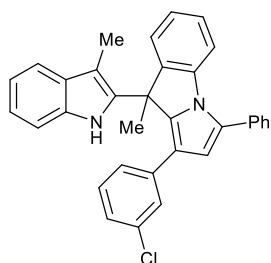
**9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-3-phenyl-1-(p-tolyl)-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ac)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1c** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3ac** (53 mg, 57%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.07 (s, 1H), 7.69 – 7.67 (m, 2H), 7.54 – 7.50 (m, 3H), 7.46 – 7.42 (m, 1H), 7.32 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.22 – 7.20 (m, 1H), 7.19 – 7.15 (m, 1H), 7.13 – 7.08 (m, 3H), 7.05 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.00 (dd, *J* = 7.6, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 6.97 – 6.95 (m, 2H), 6.58 (s, 1H), 2.25 (s, 3H), 2.08 (s, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 144.4, 139.4, 139.0, 135.4, 134.7, 132.8, 132.3, 130.5, 129.4, 129.3, 128.9, 128.6, 127.9, 127.7, 126.9, 124.4, 124.2, 121.7, 119.9, 119.3, 118.5, 114.1, 112.0, 110.7, 108.1, 45.6, 22.9, 21.1, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>34</sub>H<sub>26</sub>N<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 465.23307, found: 465.23273.



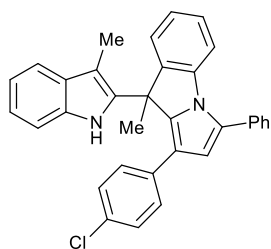
**1-(2-chlorophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-3-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ad)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1d** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3ad** (43 mg, 44%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.89 (s, 1H), 7.71 – 7.70 (m, 2H), 7.53 – 7.47 (m, 3H), 7.45 – 7.41 (m, 1H), 7.37 (dd,  $J$  = 8.0, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.28 – 7.26 (m, 1H), 7.23 – 7.19 (m, 2H), 7.16 – 7.10 (m, 3H), 7.08 – 7.00 (m, 2H), 6.81 (td,  $J$  = 7.6, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 6.59 (dd,  $J$  = 7.6, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 6.53 (s, 1H), 1.929 (s, 3H), 1.926 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.1, 141.4, 139.6, 135.4, 134.4, 134.0, 133.6, 132.7, 132.0, 130.3, 129.7, 129.2, 128.6, 128.0, 127.9, 127.86, 127.80, 126.3, 124.6, 124.2, 121.6, 119.3, 118.4, 117.0, 116.5, 112.1, 110.6, 108.0, 45.0, 24.2, 8.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{25}\text{ClN}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  485.17845, found: 485.17719.



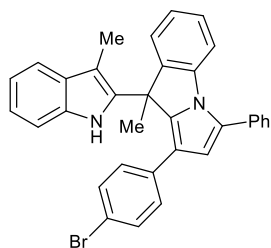
**1-(3-chlorophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-3-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ae)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1e** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3ae** (70 mg, 72%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.10 (s, 1H), 7.70 – 7.67 (m, 2H), 7.56 – 7.52 (m, 3H), 7.49 – 7.45 (m, 1H), 7.37 – 7.35 (m, 1H), 7.19 (td,  $J$  = 8.4, 1.2 Hz, 2H), 7.14 – 7.09 (m, 4H), 7.06 – 6.98 (m, 4H), 6.57 (s, 1H), 2.04 (s, 3H), 2.02 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.2, 140.3, 138.9, 137.1, 134.8, 134.7, 134.4, 132.5, 130.3, 129.8, 129.3, 129.2, 128.7, 128.1, 127.8, 127.1, 125.6, 124.9, 124.48, 124.46, 121.9, 119.5, 118.5, 113.8, 112.1, 110.8, 108.5, 45.5, 23.0, 8.6 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{25}\text{ClN}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  485.17845, found: 485.17771.



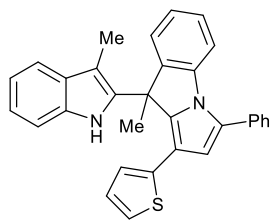
**1-(4-chlorophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-3-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3af)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1f** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3af** (80 mg, 83%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): 8.05 (s, 1H), 7.68 – 7.64 (m, 2H), 7.52 – 7.44 (m, 4H), 7.33 (dd, *J* = 7.6, 4.4 Hz, 2H), 7.20 – 7.17 (m, 2H), 7.10 – 7.07 (m, 5H), 7.05 – 6.99 (m, 3H), 6.54 (s, 1H), 2.03 – 2.01 (m, 6H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 144.2, 139.8, 138.9, 134.9, 134.7, 133.8, 132.6, 131.4, 130.4, 129.3, 129.2, 128.74, 128.70, 128.2, 128.1, 127.8, 124.4, 121.9, 119.5, 118.7, 118.6, 113.9, 112.1, 110.7, 108.4, 45.6, 23.0, 8.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>33</sub>H<sub>25</sub>ClN<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 485.17845, found: 485.17697.



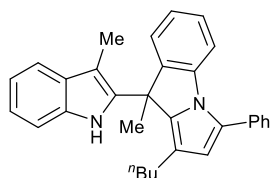
**1-(4-bromophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-3-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ag)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1g** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3ag** (82 mg, 78%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.06 (s, 1H), 7.68 – 7.66 (m, 2H), 7.55 – 7.51 (m, 3H), 7.48 – 7.45 (m, 1H), 7.34 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.27 – 7.26 (m, 1H), 7.25 – 7.23 (m, 1H), 7.21 – 7.17 (m, 2H), 7.14 – 7.09 (m, 3H), 7.03 – 7.00 (m, 1H), 6.99 (dd, *J* = 6.8, 2.0 Hz, 2H), 6.55 (s, 1H), 2.04 (s, 3H), 2.02 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 144.2, 139.9, 138.8, 134.9, 134.7, 134.3, 132.5, 131.7, 130.3, 129.3, 129.2, 128.7, 128.6, 128.1, 127.8, 124.4, 121.9, 119.52, 119.51, 118.7, 118.6, 113.8, 112.1, 110.7, 108.4, 45.6, 22.9, 8.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>33</sub>H<sub>25</sub>BrN<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 529.12794, found: 529.12733.



**9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-3-phenyl-1-(thiophen-2-yl)-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ah)**

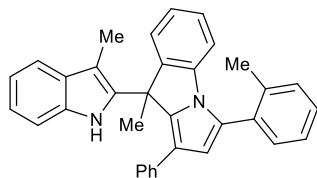
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1h** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3ah** (70 mg, 77%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.13 (s, 1H), 7.69 – 7.66 (m, 2H), 7.55 – 7.45 (m, 4H), 7.36 – 7.33 (m, 1H), 7.23 – 7.16 (m, 2H), 7.13 – 7.08 (m, 3H), 7.03 – 6.98 (m, 2H), 6.84 – 6.80 (m, 1H), 6.66 – 6.64 (m, 1H), 6.58 (s, 1H), 2.16 (s, 3H), 2.00 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 144.2, 139.0, 138.9, 137.7, 134.7, 134.1, 132.4, 130.5, 129.4, 128.9, 128.6, 128.1, 127.7, 127.6, 124.5, 124.4, 123.2, 123.0, 121.7, 119.3, 118.5, 114.0, 113.5, 112.1, 110.8, 108.5, 45.5, 22.8, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>31</sub>H<sub>24</sub>N<sub>2</sub>S [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 607.03845, found: 607.03830.



**1-butyl-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-3-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ai)**

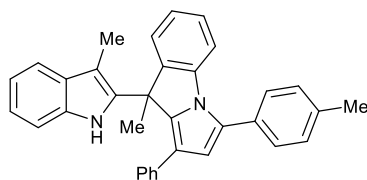
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1i** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3ai** (25 mg, 30%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.93 (s, 1H), 7.64 – 7.61 (m, 2H), 7.50 – 7.46 (m, 3H), 7.41 – 7.38 (m, 1H), 7.28 – 7.22 (m, 2H), 7.16 – 7.12 (m, 2H), 7.10 – 7.06 (m, 2H), 6.97 (td, *J* = 7.6, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 6.22 (s, 1H), 2.35 – 2.27 (m, 2H), 2.14 (s, 3H), 2.07 (s, 3H), 1.43 – 1.36 (m, 2H), 1.25 – 1.19 (m, 2H), 0.75 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 144.6, 140.3, 139.7, 135.1, 134.4, 133.2, 130.5, 128.9, 128.5, 128.1, 127.7, 127.8, 124.5, 123.6, 121.5, 119.2, 118.9, 118.3, 114.9, 111.7, 110.5, 107.8, 44.7, 33.1, 25.3, 25.2, 22.6, 14.0, 9.2 ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>31</sub>H<sub>30</sub>N<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 431.24872, found: 431.24861.





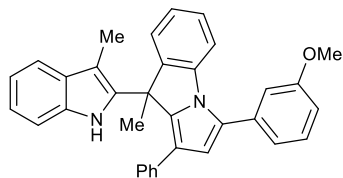
**9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-3-(o-tolyl)-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3aj)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1j** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product as a 2:1 mixture of diastereoisomers; d.r. determined by integration of  $^1\text{H}$  NMR signal:  $\delta_{\text{major}}$  8.16 (s),  $\delta_{\text{minor}}$  8.08 (s) ppm. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3aj** (58 mg, 65%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.16 (s, 1H), 7.53 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 2H), 7.43 – 7.38 (m, 4H), 7.33 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.19 – 7.15 (m, 7H), 7.10 – 7.08 (m, 1H), 7.02 (dd,  $J = 7.6, 0.8$  Hz, 1H), 6.98 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 1H), 6.53 (s, 1H), 6.50 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 2.37 (s, 3H), 2.03 (s, 3H), 1.98 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  143.8, 139.0, 138.6, 138.0, 135.5, 135.3, 134.7, 132.6, 131.4, 130.4, 130.2, 129.0, 128.7, 128.0, 127.0, 126.9, 126.8, 126.0, 125.6, 124.2, 124.1, 121.7, 119.44, 119.40, 118.5, 113.3, 110.8, 110.7, 108.28, 108.25, 45.4, 22.7, 20.4, 8.6 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{28}\text{N}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  465.23307, found: 465.23198.



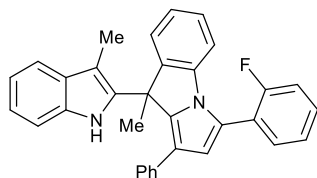
**9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-3-(p-tolyl)-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ak)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1k** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3ak** (42 mg, 45%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.07 (s, 1H), 7.58 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.34 – 7.31 (m, 3H), 7.21 (dd,  $J = 7.6, 0.4$  Hz, 1H), 7.17 – 7.13 (m, 5H), 7.12 – 7.07 (m, 4H), 6.99 (td,  $J = 7.2, 1.6$  Hz, 1H), 6.57 (s, 1H), 2.48 (s, 3H), 2.09 (s, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.3, 139.4, 139.0, 137.8, 135.4, 135.3, 134.7, 130.5, 129.8, 129.3, 129.2, 129.1, 128.6, 127.7, 127.0, 125.7, 124.4, 124.2, 121.7, 119.8, 119.3, 118.5, 113.8, 112.0, 110.7, 108.1, 45.6, 23.0, 21.5, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{28}\text{N}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  465.23307, found: 465.23233.



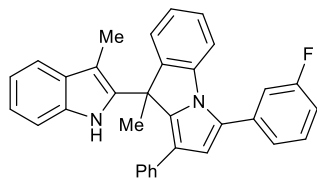
### 3-(3-methoxyphenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (**3al**)

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1l** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3al** (66 mg, 69%) as a white solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.08 (s, 1H), 7.53 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.44 (t,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.34 – 7.27 (m, 3H), 7.23 – 7.21 (m, 2H), 7.19 – 7.18 (m, 1H), 7.16 – 7.15 (m, 4H), 7.14 – 7.09 (m, 3H), 7.03 – 6.99 (m, 2H), 6.62 (s, 1H), 3.91 (s, 3H), 2.08 (s, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  159.7, 144.3, 139.7, 138.9, 135.3, 135.2, 134.7, 134.0, 130.5, 129.6, 128.9, 128.6, 127.7, 127.0, 125.8, 124.4, 124.3, 121.8, 121.7, 119.9, 119.3, 118.5, 114.6, 114.2, 113.7, 112.1, 110.7, 108.2, 55.5, 45.6, 22.9, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{28}\text{N}_2\text{O}$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  481.22799, found: 481.22645.



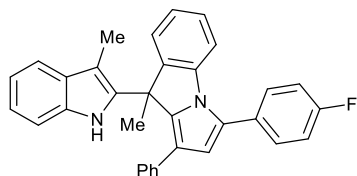
### 3-(2-fluorophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (**3am**)

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1m** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3am** (82 mg, 88%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.09 (s, 1H), 7.64 (td,  $J = 7.6, 2.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.52 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.50 – 7.44 (m, 1H), 7.36 – 7.27 (m, 3H), 7.22 – 7.18 (m, 2H), 7.17 – 7.15 (m, 4H), 7.14 – 7.09 (m, 3H), 7.01 (t,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 6.91 (dd,  $J = 8.0, 2.4$  Hz, 1H), 6.67 (s, 1H), 2.05 (s, 3H), 2.04 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  160.4 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 247.9$  Hz), 144.1, 139.8, 138.9, 135.14, 135.10, 134.7, 132.1 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 2.5$  Hz), 130.5, 130.1 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 7.9$  Hz), 128.6, 127.9, 127.0, 125.8, 124.4 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 3.8$  Hz), 124.3 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 4.2$  Hz), 121.7, 121.4, 119.9, 119.4, 118.6, 116.2, 116.0, 115.2, 111.5 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 1.9$  Hz), 110.7, 108.4, 45.6, 22.7, 8.6 ppm.  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -113.12 – -113.15 (m) ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{25}\text{FN}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  469.20800, found: 469.20791.



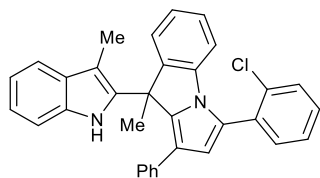
### 3-(3-fluorophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3an)

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1n** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3an** (50 mg, 53%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.08 (s, 1H), 7.53 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.50 – 7.47 (m, 2H), 7.40 (dd,  $J = 10.0, 1.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.34 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.23 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.19 – 7.10 (m, 10H), 7.03 (td,  $J = 7.6, 1.6$  Hz, 1H), 6.63 (s, 1H), 2.05 (s, 3H), 2.04 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ): 162.8 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 246.6$  Hz), 144.2, 140.2, 138.7, 135.0, 134.9, 134.8 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 8.4$  Hz), 134.7, 130.4, 130.1 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 8.6$  Hz), 128.6, 127.8, 127.0, 125.9, 124.9 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 2.9$  Hz), 124.5, 124.4, 121.8, 120.1, 119.4, 118.5, 116.1, 115.9, 114.8, 114.7 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 21.1$  Hz), 111.9, 110.7, 108.2, 45.5, 22.9, 8.7 ppm.  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -112.49 – -112.54 (m) ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{25}\text{FN}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  469.20800, found: 469.20660.



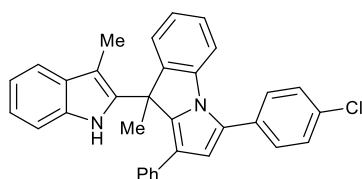
### 3-(4-fluorophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ao)

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1o** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3ao** (63 mg, 67%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.07 (s, 1H), 7.67 – 7.62 (m, 2H), 7.52 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.34 – 7.32 (m, 1H), 7.24 – 7.22 (m, 2H), 7.21 – 7.20 (m, 1H), 7.18 – 7.14 (m, 5H), 7.13 – 7.07 (m, 3H), 7.04 – 7.00 (m, 2H), 6.57 (s, 1H), 2.06 (s, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  160.7 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 247.5$  Hz), 142.3, 137.6, 136.8, 133.1 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 7.4$  Hz), 132.7, 129.1 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 8.1$  Hz), 128.5, 126.7, 125.8, 125.8, 125.0, 123.8, 122.4 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 19.4$  Hz), 119.8, 117.9, 117.4, 116.5, 113.7 (d,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 21.6$  Hz), 112.1, 109.7, 108.7, 106.2, 43.6, 20.9, 6.8 ppm.  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -115.67 – -115.73 (m) ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{25}\text{FN}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  469.20800, found: 469.20795.



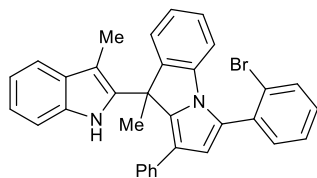
### 3-(2-chlorophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (**3ap**)

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1p** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product as a 2.5:1 mixture of diastereoisomers; d.r. determined by integration of  $^1\text{H}$  NMR signal:  $\delta_{\text{major}}$  8.10 (s),  $\delta_{\text{minor}}$  8.09 (s) ppm. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3ap** (75 mg, 78%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.10 (s, 1H), 7.65 (dd,  $J = 6.8, 2.0$  Hz, 2H), 7.60 – 7.59 (m, 1H), 7.52 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.46 – 7.43 (m, 2H), 7.37 – 7.32 (m, 1H), 7.17 – 7.14 (m, 6H), 7.10 – 7.09 (m, 1H), 7.07 – 7.05 (m, 1H), 7.01 – 6.97 (m, 1H), 6.63 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 6.60 (s, 1H), 2.07 (s, 3H), 2.04 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  143.9, 139.0, 138.8, 135.3, 135.0, 134.7, 132.8, 132.1, 130.5, 130.1, 129.9, 128.7, 127.9, 127.0, 125.7, 124.6, 124.2, 124.1, 121.7, 119.4, 118.6, 114.4, 111.3, 110.7, 108.5, 45.6, 22.6, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{25}\text{ClN}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  485.17845, found: 485.17733.



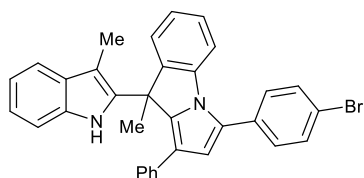
### 3-(4-chlorophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (**3aq**)

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1q** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3aq** (77 mg, 80%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.07 (s, 1H), 7.62 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 2H), 7.53 – 7.49 (m, 3H), 7.34 – 7.32 (m, 2H), 7.22 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.17 – 7.09 (m, 8H), 7.04 – 7.00 (m, 1H), 6.59 (s, 1H), 2.05 (s, 3H), 2.04 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.3, 140.0, 138.8, 135.1, 135.0, 134.7, 133.9, 131.2, 130.5, 130.4, 128.9, 128.7, 127.8, 127.7, 127.0, 125.9, 124.6, 124.4, 121.8, 120.1, 119.4, 118.5, 114.5, 111.8, 110.7, 108.2, 45.6, 22.9, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{25}\text{ClN}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  485.17845, found: 485.17712.



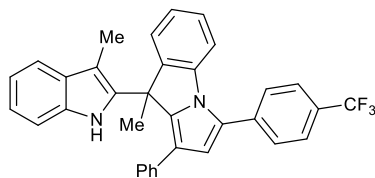
### 3-(2-bromophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ar)

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1r** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product as a 2:1 mixture of diastereoisomers; d.r. determined by integration of  $^1\text{H}$  NMR signal:  $\delta_{\text{major}}$  6.60 (s),  $\delta_{\text{minor}}$  6.67 (s) ppm. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3ar** (65 mg, 62%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.08 (s, 1H), 7.78 (d,  $J = 1.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.64 (dd,  $J = 5.6, 2.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.52 – 7.48 (m, 2H), 7.39 – 7.35 (m, 2H), 7.20 – 7.16 (m, 7H), 7.10 – 7.09 (m, 1H), 7.07 (d,  $J = 1.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.00 (dd,  $J = 7.6, 0.8$  Hz, 1H), 6.60 (s, 1H), 6.58 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 2.13 (s, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.0, 138.7, 138.7, 135.2, 135.1, 134.7, 134.2, 133.0, 133.0, 130.4, 130.3, 128.7, 128.6, 127.9, 127.6, 126.9, 126.2, 125.9, 125.7, 124.2, 124.1, 121.7, 119.4, 119.3, 118.6, 114.2, 111.3, 110.7, 108.4, 45.7, 22.6, 9.2 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{25}\text{BrN}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  529.12794, found: 529.12773.



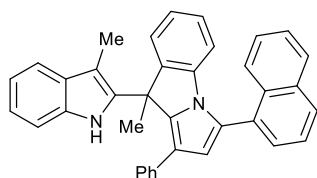
### 3-(4-bromophenyl)-9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3as)

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1s** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3as** (79 mg, 75%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.07 (s, 1H), 7.67 – 7.65 (m, 2H), 7.57 – 7.51 (m, 3H), 7.35 – 7.32 (m, 1H), 7.22 (dd,  $J = 7.6, 1.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.19 – 7.09 (m, 9H), 7.05 – 7.00 (m, 1H), 6.60 (s, 1H), 2.05 (s, 3H), 2.04 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.3, 140.1, 138.7, 135.0, 135.0, 134.7, 131.8, 131.7, 130.7, 130.4, 128.7, 127.8, 127.7, 127.0, 125.9, 124.6, 124.5, 122.0, 121.8, 120.2, 119.4, 118.5, 114.5, 111.8, 110.7, 108.2, 45.6, 22.9, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{25}\text{BrN}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  529.12794, found: 529.12657.



**9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-3-(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3at)**

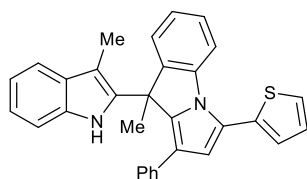
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1t** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3at** (80 mg, 77%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.08 (s, 1H), 7.80 (dd,  $J = 12.4, 8.4$  Hz, 4H), 7.52 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.34 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.23 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.21 – 7.11 (m, 9H), 7.06 – 7.02 (m, 1H), 6.66 (s, 1H), 2.04 (s, 3H), 2.04 (s, 3H) ppm,  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.3, 140.9, 138.7, 136.3, 134.87, 134.85, 134.7, 130.4, 129.8, 129.5, 129.1, 128.7, 127.9, 127.5, 127.1, 126.0, 125.7 (q,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 3.8$  Hz), 124.6, 124.4 (q,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 271.9$  Hz), 121.9, 120.5, 119.5, 118.6, 115.5, 111.9, 110.7, 108.3, 45.6, 23.0, 8.7 ppm.  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -62.24 (s) ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{25}\text{F}_3\text{N}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  519.20481, found: 519.20470.



**9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-3-(naphthalen-1-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3au)**

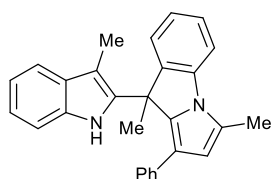
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1u** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product as a 1.5:1 mixture of diastereoisomers; d.r. determined by integration of  $^1\text{H}$  NMR signal:  $\delta_{\text{major}}$  8.20 (s),  $\delta_{\text{minor}}$  8.11 (s) ppm. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3au** (79 mg, 79%) as a white solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.20 (s, 1H), 8.01 (dd,  $J = 12.0, 8.4$  Hz, 4H), 7.76 (dd,  $J = 4.0, 1.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.65 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.56 – 7.53 (m, 3H), 7.51 – 7.48 (m, 1H), 7.42 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.19 – 7.15 (m, 6H), 6.91 – 6.88 (m, 1H), 6.87 – 6.85 (m, 1H), 6.72 (s, 1H), 6.16 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 2.10 (s, 3H), 2.08 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  143.0, 138.9, 138.7, 135.4, 135.2, 134.7, 133.8, 133.2, 130.5, 130.4, 129.12, 129.10, 128.7, 128.5, 127.7, 127.0, 126.9, 126.4, 126.3, 125.8, 125.7, 125.5, 124.1, 124.0, 121.7, 119.7, 119.5, 118.6, 115.1, 111.8,

110.8, 108.3, 45.6, 22.9, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{37}H_{28}N_2$   $[M+H]^+$  501.23307, found: 501.23289.



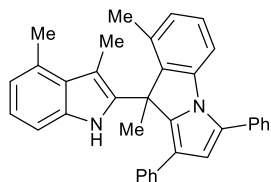
**9-methyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-3-(thiophen-2-yl)-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3av)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1v** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3av** (61 mg, 67%) as a yellow solid.  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.05 (s, 1H), 7.54 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.47 (dd,  $J$  = 5.2, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.35 (dd,  $J$  = 3.6, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.23 – 7.18 (m, 4H), 7.17 – 7.11 (m, 7H), 7.03 (td,  $J$  = 7.6, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (s, 1H), 2.08 (s, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.2, 139.8, 138.7, 135.0, 134.9, 134.7, 133.6, 130.4, 128.7, 128.2, 127.9, 127.5, 127.0, 126.4, 125.9, 124.44, 124.43, 121.8, 120.3, 119.9, 119.4, 118.5, 116.0, 111.8, 110.7, 108.3, 45.9, 22.9, 8.9 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{31}H_{24}N_2S$   $[M+H]^+$  457.17384, found: 457.17245.



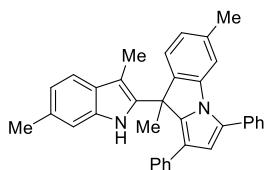
**3,9-dimethyl-9-(3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-1-phenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3aw)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1w** and indole **2a** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3aw** (25 mg, 32%) as a yellow solid.  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.97 (s, 1H), 7.49 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.40 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.28 – 7.24 (m, 2H), 7.22 – 7.20 (m, 1H), 7.13 (dd,  $J$  = 7.2, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.11 – 7.10 (m, 4H), 7.08 – 6.99 (m, 3H), 6.32 (s, 1H), 2.67 (s, 3H), 2.07 (s, 3H), 2.00 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.3, 139.2, 137.6, 135.6, 135.4, 134.7, 130.5, 128.6, 128.0, 126.7, 125.4, 124.7, 123.8, 123.6, 121.6, 119.2, 118.6, 118.5, 111.8, 110.74, 110.70, 108.0, 46.0, 23.1, 13.5, 9.0 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{28}H_{24}N_2$   $[M+H]^+$  389.20177, found: 389.20156.



### 9-(3,4-dimethyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-8,9-dimethyl-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (**3ba**)

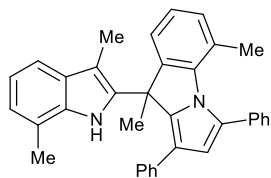
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2b** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3ba** (58 mg, 61%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.18 (s, 1H), 7.67 – 7.64 (m, 2H), 7.53 – 7.49 (m, 2H), 7.46 – 7.41 (m, 1H), 7.27 – 7.25 (m, 1H), 7.11 – 7.06 (m, 4H), 7.05 – 7.00 (m, 2H), 6.92 – 6.90 (m, 2H), 6.83 – 6.80 (m, 2H), 6.51 (s, 1H), 2.65 (s, 3H), 1.99 (s, 3H), 1.95 (s, 6H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 140.6, 140.1, 139.7, 135.6, 135.5, 134.9, 133.6, 133.0, 131.1, 129.4, 128.5, 128.4, 128.2, 127.8, 127.5, 126.5, 125.6, 121.5, 121.4, 118.9, 114.7, 110.1, 109.9, 108.9, 44.9, 21.4, 20.8, 17.9, 10.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>35</sub>H<sub>30</sub>N<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 479.24872, found: 479.24837.



### 9-(3,6-dimethyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-6,9-dimethyl-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (**3ca**)

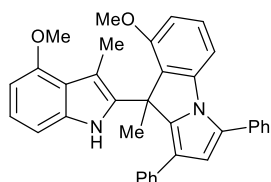
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2c** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3ca** (90 mg, 94%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.93 (s, 1H), 7.72 – 7.69 (m, 2H), 7.56 – 7.52 (m, 2H), 7.49 – 7.44 (m, 1H), 7.41 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.22 – 7.15 (m, 4H), 7.12 – 7.08 (m, 3H), 6.97 – 6.95 (m, 2H), 6.84 – 6.81 (m, 1H), 6.61 (s, 1H), 2.48 (s, 3H), 2.25 (s, 3H), 2.08 (s, 3H), 2.02 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 141.7, 140.3, 139.0, 137.6, 135.3, 135.2, 134.7, 132.8, 131.4, 129.3, 128.9, 128.6, 128.5, 128.4, 127.9, 127.0, 125.7, 124.9, 124.0, 121.0, 119.8, 118.2, 114.1, 112.7, 110.7, 107.8, 45.4, 22.9, 21.9, 21.8, 8.9 ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>35</sub>H<sub>30</sub>N<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 479.24872, found: 479.24832.





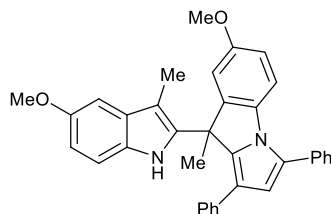
**9-(3,7-dimethyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-5,9-dimethyl-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3da)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2d** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3da** (40 mg, 42%) as a yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.94 (s, 1H), 7.62 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.52 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.47 – 7.37 (m, 4H), 7.17 – 7.07 (m, 7H), 7.02 – 6.96 (m, 3H), 6.57 (s, 1H), 2.53 (s, 3H), 2.04 (s, 3H), 1.95 (s, 3H), 1.77 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.9, 140.7, 138.6, 135.8, 135.6, 135.4, 134.1, 131.8, 130.0, 129.9, 129.3, 129.2, 128.5, 128.4, 128.3, 127.7, 127.4, 125.7, 124.4, 122.4, 122.3, 121.9, 119.8, 119.6, 119.2, 116.3, 116.2, 108.8, 44.8, 23.7, 21.5, 16.8, 8.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{35}\text{H}_{30}\text{N}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  479.24872, found: 479.24861.



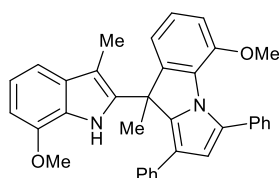
**8-methoxy-9-(4-methoxy-3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-9-methyl-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ea)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2e** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 60:1) yielded **3ea** (92 mg, 92%) as a white solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.32 (s, 1H), 7.68 – 7.65 (m, 2H), 7.52 – 7.48 (m, 2H), 7.45 – 7.41 (m, 1H), 7.16 – 7.15 (m, 4H), 7.11 – 7.00 (m, 4H), 6.74 (dd,  $J = 8.0, 0.4$  Hz, 1H), 6.57 (s, 1H), 6.54 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 1H), 6.47 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 1H), 3.85 (s, 3H), 3.68 (s, 3H), 2.06 (s, 3H), 2.05 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  156.2, 155.2, 140.5, 140.1, 136.4, 135.5, 133.1, 132.9, 129.4, 129.24, 129.20, 128.65, 128.60, 128.5, 127.7, 127.2, 125.5, 121.7, 119.6, 119.4, 114.2, 108.8, 107.5, 105.4, 104.3, 99.6, 55.8, 55.2, 44.6, 19.8, 9.9 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{35}\text{H}_{30}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  511.23855, found: 511.23791.



**7-methoxy-9-(5-methoxy-3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-9-methyl-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3fa)**

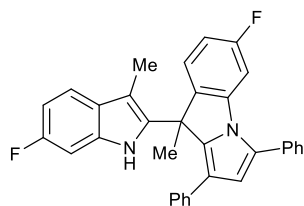
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2f** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 60:1) yielded **3fa** (78 mg, 78%) as a white solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.01 (s, 1H), 7.68 – 7.66 (m, 2H), 7.53 – 7.49 (m, 2H), 7.46 – 7.41 (m, 1H), 7.23 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.17 – 7.08 (m, 5H), 7.05 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 6.96 (d,  $J$  = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.84 (dd,  $J$  = 8.8, 2.8 Hz, 1H), 6.78 (d,  $J$  = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.62 (dd,  $J$  = 8.8, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.57 (s, 1H), 3.87 (s, 3H), 3.71 (s, 3H), 2.02 (s, 3H), 2.01 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  157.0, 154.1, 145.8, 139.6, 136.2, 135.4, 132.84, 132.80, 130.9, 129.8, 129.2, 128.6, 128.59, 128.58, 127.8, 127.0, 125.6, 119.8, 113.4, 112.4, 112.3, 111.8, 111.5, 110.9, 108.1, 100.5, 56.0, 55.8, 45.8, 23.0, 8.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{35}\text{H}_{30}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  511.23855, found: 511.23832.



**5-methoxy-9-(7-methoxy-3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-9-methyl-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ga)**

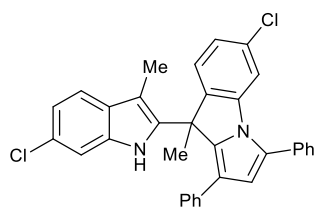
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2g** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 60:1) yielded **3ga** (51 mg, 51%) as a white solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.30 (s, 1H), 7.51 (d,  $J$  = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 7.43 – 7.39 (m, 2H), 7.38 – 7.34 (m, 1H), 7.13 – 7.05 (m, 6H), 7.04 – 7.00 (m, 1H), 6.96 (t,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.80 (d,  $J$  = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 6.64 (d,  $J$  = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.53 (s, 1H), 3.99 (s, 3H), 3.22 (s, 3H), 2.01 (s, 3H), 1.94 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  145.91, 145.90, 145.8, 139.3, 136.1, 135.5, 135.3, 131.8, 130.1, 128.6, 128.1, 127.1, 126.9, 126.8, 125.5, 125.3, 125.0, 119.6, 119.2, 116.4, 114.9, 111.5, 111.3, 108.8, 101.7, 55.4, 55.0, 45.4, 23.0, 8.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for

C<sub>35</sub>H<sub>30</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 511.23855, found: 511.23820.



**6-fluoro-9-(6-fluoro-3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-9-methyl-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ha)**

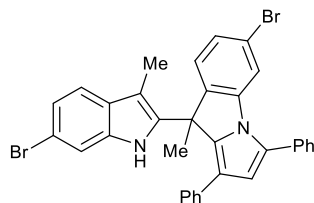
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2h** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3ha** (78 mg, 80%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.03 (s, 1H), 7.66 – 7.63 (m, 2H), 7.56 – 7.51 (m, 2H), 7.49 – 7.46 (m, 1H), 7.40 (dd, *J* = 8.4, 5.2 Hz, 1H), 7.18 – 7.10 (m, 6H), 7.01 (dd, *J* = 9.6, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.90 – 6.85 (m, 1H), 6.82 (dd, *J* = 9.6, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (td, *J* = 8.8, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.59 (s, 1H), 2.03 (s, 3H), 2.01 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 162.4 (d, *J*<sub>CF</sub> = 240.4 Hz), 160.0 (d, *J*<sub>CF</sub> = 233.2 Hz), 140.2, 139.9 (d, *J*<sub>CF</sub> = 12.0 Hz), 139.7 (d, *J*<sub>CF</sub> = 3.0 Hz), 134.9, 134.5 (d, *J*<sub>CF</sub> = 12.5 Hz), 132.2, 129.22, 129.20, 128.8, 128.7, 127.1, 126.9, 126.0, 125.1 (d, *J*<sub>CF</sub> = 10.1 Hz), 120.3, 119.3 (d, *J*<sub>CF</sub> = 10.2 Hz), 114.6, 110.6 (d, *J*<sub>CF</sub> = 23.0 Hz), 108.1 (d, *J*<sub>CF</sub> = 20.9 Hz), 100.7, 100.4, 97.3, 97.0, 45.2, 23.1, 8.8 ppm. <sup>19</sup>F NMR (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ -112.73 – -112.80 (m), -121.35 – -121.42 (m) ppm. HR-MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>33</sub>H<sub>24</sub>F<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 487.19858, found: 487.19754.



**6-chloro-9-(6-chloro-3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-9-methyl-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ia)**

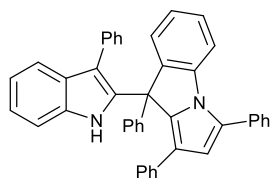
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2i** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3ia** (67 mg, 65%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.07 (s, 1H), 7.66 – 7.63 (m, 2H), 7.56 – 7.52 (m, 2H), 7.49 – 7.45 (m, 1H), 7.40 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.31 (dd, *J* = 1.6, 0.4 Hz, 1H), 7.17 – 7.13 (m, 2H), 7.12 – 7.06 (m, 6H), 6.98 (dd, *J* = 8.4, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 6.59 (s, 1H), 2.00 (s, 3H), 1.99 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 142.5, 139.9, 139.5, 135.4, 135.0, 134.8, 133.5, 132.1, 129.3, 129.2,

129.0, 128.8, 128.7, 128.4, 127.8, 127.0, 126.1, 125.1, 124.2, 120.4, 120.3, 119.5, 114.8, 112.6, 110.7, 108.6, 45.2, 23.0, 8.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{33}H_{24}Cl_2N_2$   $[M+H]^+$  519.13948, found: 519.13868.



**6-bromo-9-(6-bromo-3-methyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-9-methyl-1,3-diphenyl-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ja)**

The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2j** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 120:1) yielded **3ja** (102 mg, 84%) as a yellow solid.  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.08 (s, 1H), 7.66 – 7.63 (m, 2H), 7.56 – 7.53 (m, 2H), 7.50 – 7.47 (m, 2H), 7.36 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.25 (d,  $J$  = 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.21 (dd,  $J$  = 8.4, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.17 – 7.08 (m, 6H), 7.03 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.60 (s, 1H), 2.00 (s, 3H), 1.99 (s, 3H) ppm.  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  143.0, 140.1, 139.3, 135.4, 135.3, 134.7, 132.1, 129.3, 129.23, 129.20, 128.8, 128.7, 128.4, 127.1, 127.0, 126.1, 125.5, 122.9, 121.3, 120.4, 119.9, 115.39, 115.36, 114.8, 113.7, 108.6, 45.2, 22.86, 8.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{33}H_{24}Br_2N_2$   $[M+H]^+$  607.03845, found: 607.03830.

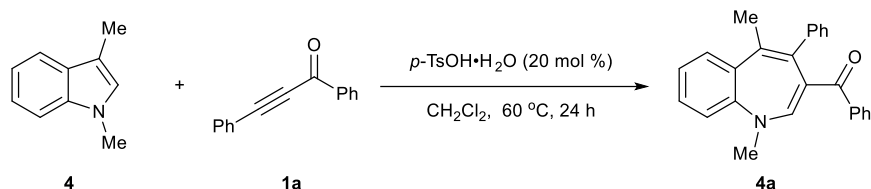


**1,3,9-triphenyl-9-(3-phenyl-1H-indol-2-yl)-9H-pyrrolo[1,2-a]indole (3ka)**

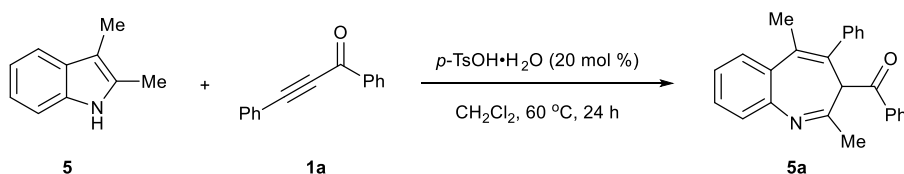
The general procedure was followed using substrate ynone **1a** and indole **2k** to furnish the crude product. The title compound was isolated by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether/EtOAc: 100:1) yielded **3ka** (48 mg, 44%) as a yellow solid.  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.95 (s, 1H), 7.61 – 7.58 (m, 2H), 7.57 – 7.54 (m, 2H), 7.52 – 7.48 (m, 1H), 7.46 – 7.42 (m, 1H), 7.33 – 7.29 (m, 4H), 7.20 – 7.19 (m, 2H), 7.15 – 7.10 (m, 4H), 7.09 – 7.03 (m, 3H), 7.00 – 6.98 (m, 3H), 6.86 (dd,  $J$  = 7.6, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 6.80 (d,  $J$  = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.74 – 6.70 (m, 3H), 6.45 (s, 1H) ppm.  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  142.3, 141.7, 139.5, 138.3, 135.9, 135.0, 134.7, 134.0, 132.7, 130.3, 129.7, 129.3, 128.91, 128.90, 128.5, 128.49, 128.45, 128.3,

127.79, 127.75, 127.6, 127.4, 126.8, 126.2, 125.7, 123.5, 122.2, 121.6, 120.0, 119.5, 116.5, 115.3, 111.7, 110.7, 54.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{43}H_{30}N_2$   $[M+H]^+$  575.24872, found: 575.24774.

### 3. Control Experiments



A solution of  $p$ -TsOH H<sub>2</sub>O (7.6 mg, 0.04 mmol, 20 mol%), ynone **1a** (0.2 mmol) and indole **4** (0.8 mmol) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.4 mL) was stirred at 60 °C for 24 h. After cooling to ambient temperature, the mixture was purified by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether /EtOAc: 60:1) yielded **4a** (28 mg, 40%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.46 – 7.43 (m, 2H), 7.34 – 7.32 (m, 2H), 7.24 – 7.20 (m, 3H), 7.15 – 7.10 (m, 3H), 7.08 – 7.05 (m, 1H), 7.04 – 7.01 (m, 2H), 6.94 (s, 1H), 6.90 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 3.16 (s, 3H), 2.11 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  196.0, 156.1, 153.9, 141.2, 139.6, 139.0, 137.2, 136.9, 131.4, 129.9, 129.0, 128.4, 127.9, 127.7, 126.7, 124.2, 116.4, 39.9, 22.4 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{25}H_{21}NO$   $[M+H]^+$  352.17014, found: 352.16891. The analytical data are in accordance with these reported in the literature.<sup>3</sup>



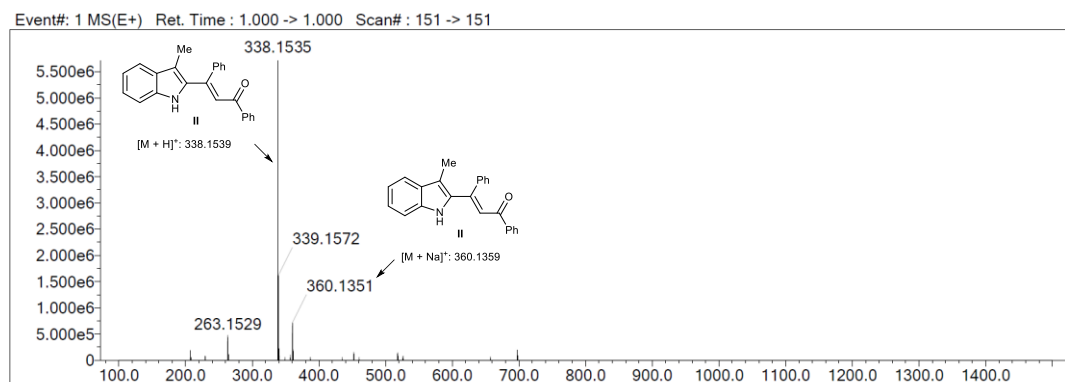
A solution of  $p$ -TsOH H<sub>2</sub>O (7.6 mg, 0.04 mmol, 20 mol %), ynone **1a** (0.2 mmol) and indole **5** (0.8 mmol) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.4 mL) was stirred at 60 °C for 24 h. After cooling to ambient temperature, the mixture was purified by column chromatography (Petroleum Ether /EtOAc: 60:1) yielded **5a** (18 mg, 26%) as a yellow solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.85 – 7.82 (m, 2H), 7.66 (dd,  $J$  = 8.4, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (dd,  $J$  = 8.4, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.43 – 7.38 (m, 3H), 7.37 – 7.32 (m, 4H), 7.23 – 7.18 (m, 3H), 4.94 (s, 1H), 2.16 (s, 3H), 1.84 (s, 3H) ppm. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  202.8, 160.4, 146.7, 142.9, 138.6, 135.0, 132.6, 132.5, 130.6, 128.9, 128.8, 128.6, 128.2, 127.7, 127.44, 127.40, 127.3, 124.8, 62.5, 28.2, 19.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{25}H_{21}NO$   $[M+H]^+$  352.17014, found: 352.16941.

## 4. Intermediate Characterization

### HR-MS studies of the *p*-TsOH H<sub>2</sub>O catalyzed cascade reaction

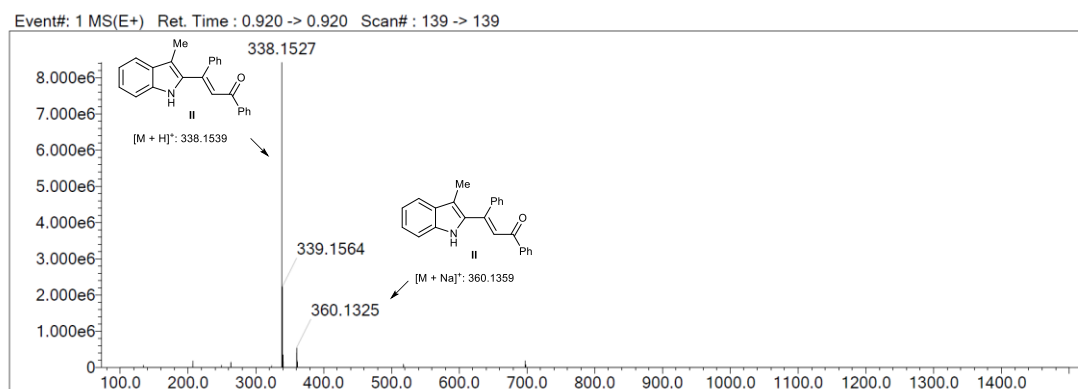
The HR-MS analysis refers to the reaction under the optimal conditions.

Ynone **1a** (0.2 mol), 3-methyl-1*H*-indole **2a** (0.8 mol) and 20 mol % of *p*-TsOH·H<sub>2</sub>O in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.4 mL) at 60 °C. The crude mixture of the reaction was collected 10 minutes after the start of the reaction. As detailed in Figure S1, the HR-MS spectrum in positive mode of the reaction mixture showed the presence of the intermediate **II** at 338.1535 [M + H]<sup>+</sup> and 360.1351 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>. The results indicated that the intermediate **II** was formed by the Friedel-Crafts alkenylation of substrates **1a** with **2a**.



**Figure S1.** Detectable intermediates by HR-MS analysis in positive mode of the catalytic reaction of **1a** and **2a**. The analyzed sample was collected 10 minutes after the start of the reaction.

A second HR-MS spectrum in positive mode, detailed in Figure S2, was measured 30 minutes after the start of the catalytic reaction.

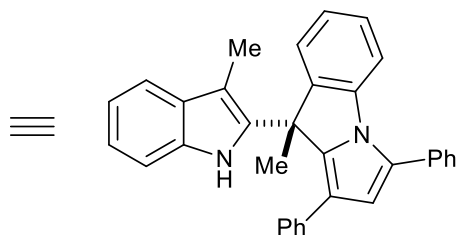
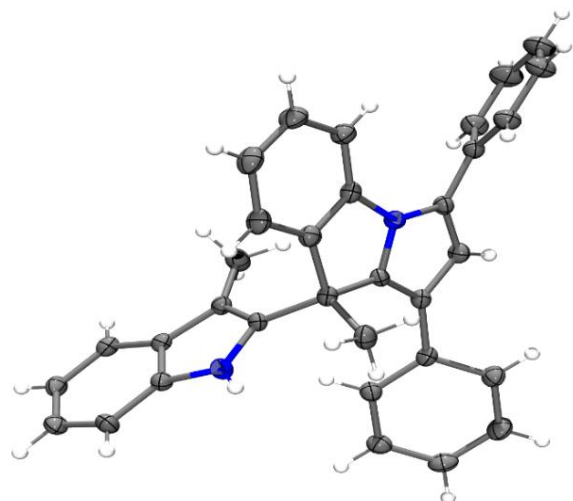


**Figure S2.** Detectable intermediates by HR-MS analysis in positive mode of the catalytic reaction of **1a** and **2a**. The analyzed sample was collected 30 minutes after the start of the reaction.

## 5. References

1. K. Okamoto, T. Shimbayashi, E. Tamura and K. Ohe, *Org. Lett.*, 2015, **17**, 5843.
2. Z. Liu, Z. Yang, X. Yu, H. Zhang, B. Yu, Y. Zhao and Z. Liu, *Org. Lett.*, 2017, **19**, 5228.
3. T. R. Pradhan, H. W. Kim and J. K. Park, *Org. Lett.*, 2018, **20**, 5286.

## 6. Crystal data of 3aa



3aa, CCDC: 1944343

Empirical formula	C <sub>33</sub> H <sub>26</sub> N <sub>2</sub>
Formula weight	450.56
Temperature/K	293(2)
Crystal system	N/A
Space group	C2/c
a/Å	16.9959(6)
b/Å	10.4193(4)
c/Å	30.6729(11)
$\alpha$ /°	90.00
$\beta$ /°	90.081(3)
$\gamma$ /°	90.00
Volume/Å <sup>3</sup>	5431.7(3)
Z	8
$\rho_{\text{calc}}$ /cm <sup>3</sup>	1.102
$\mu$ /mm <sup>-1</sup>	0.490
F(000)	1904.0
Crystal size/mm <sup>3</sup>	0.12 × 0.11 × 0.11
Radiation	CuK $\alpha$ ( $\lambda$ = 1.54178)
2 $\theta$ range for data collection/°	9.96 to 134.5
Index ranges	-18 ≤ h ≤ 20, -12 ≤ k ≤ 12, -36 ≤ l ≤ 36
Reflections collected	22454
Independent reflections	4863 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.0477, R <sub>sigma</sub> = N/A]
Data/restraints/parameters	4863/0/319
Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	1.499



Final R indexes [ $I \geq 2\sigma(I)$ ]	$R_1 = 0.1324$ , $wR_2 = 0.3673$
Final R indexes [all data]	$R_1 = 0.1568$ , $wR_2 = 0.3965$
Largest diff. peak/hole / $e \text{ \AA}^{-3}$	2.96/-0.39

## 7. NMR Spectra

